

Message Text

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SUBJECT: STUDENT VIOLENCE

1. WITH THE SCHOOL YEAR BARELY STARTED, IT IS ALREADY CLEAR THAT TURKEY IS LIKELY TO HAVE ITS BLOODIEST ACADEMIC YEAR SINCE THE 1971 COUP. SINCE THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER, STUDENT VIOLENCE HAS RESULTED IN AT LEAST 800 CASUALTIES INCLUDING 19 DEATHS, WITH TEN PERSONS DYING IN STUDENT VIOLENCE IN NOVEMBER ALONE (SEVEN STUDENTS, ONE TEACHER, AND TWO BYSTANDERS). BY COMPARISON, IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR, FROM SEPTEMBER, 1975, THROUGH AUGUST, 1976 (WHICH WAS CONSIDERED AN EXCEPTIONALLY VIOLENT YEAR), A TOTAL OF 27 PEOPLE ARE KNOWN TO HAVE DIED IN STUDENT-RELATED VIOLENCE (ALTHOUGH SOME ESTIMATES PLACE THE 1975-76 TOTAL AT AROUND 60-70). THIS APPEARS TO CONFIRM THE VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS VIEW OF CONTACTS IN TURKISH ACADEMIC CIRCLES, EXPRESSED BEFORE THE CURRENT TOLL HAD HAD TIME TO MOUNT, THAT THIS YEAR WOULD BE AT LEAST AS BAD AS LAST YEAR, AND PROBABLY WORSE.

2. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE INCIDENTS HAVE INVOLVED FIGHTING BETWEEN RIVAL LEFTIST FACTIONS, AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN SIMPLY BETWEEN STUDENTS AND AUTHORITIES, MOST OF THE SERIOUS INCIDENTS HAVE INVOLVED CLASHES BETWEEN LEFTISTS AND RIGHTISTS, WITH THE LATTER NORMALLY BEING IDENTIFIED AS "COMMANDOS," THE UNOFFICIAL YOUTH MILITIA OF THE

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NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP) OF DEPRIMIN TURKES. A LARGE

PORION OF THE INCIDENTS APPEAR TO RESULT FROM PREMEDITATED ATTACKS BY ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER, RATHER THAN FROM RANDOM ENCOUNTERS.

3. A DISTURBING ASPECT OF THE VIOLENCE IS ITS CONTINUING SPREAD TO LOWER AGE GROUPS AND TO PREVIOUSLY PEACEFUL SCHOOLS OUTSIDE THE MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS. HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE ACCOUNTED FOR ABOUT ONE-FOURTH TO ONE-THIRD OF THE INCIDENTS SINCE SEPTEMBER, INCLUDING AT LEAST FIVE OF THE 19 DEATHS, AND SOME INCIDENTS HAVE EVEN OCCURRED IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

4. COMMENT: THE ROOT CAUSES OF TURKISH STUDENT VIOLENCE WERE ANALYZED IN ANKARA A-38. APART FROM THOSE FACTORS, THE PRECISE CAUSES OF THE ESCALATION OF STUDENT VIOLENCE THIS YEAR ARE NOT CLEAR. A MAJOR REASON MAY BE SIMPLY THAT VIOLENCE BREEDS MORE VIOLENCE; A FREQUENTLY OCCURRING PATTERN IS DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY OF STUDENT FROM ONE CAMP, FOLLOWED BY ATTACK ON OTHER CAMP TO AVENGE THE "MARTYR", RESULTING IN THE CREATION OF MARTYRS ON THAT SIDE AND START OF NEW CYCLE OF VIOLENCE. VIOLENT ATMOSPHERE HAS ENCOURAGED THE CARRYING OF FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS BY STUDENTS (INCLUDING MANY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS) AND THE BUILDUP OF ARSENALS BY VARIOUS GROUPS. INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS FIND IT NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO REMAIN NEUTRAL AS MORE AGGRESSIVE STUDENTS BULLY THEM INTO JOINING THE DOMINANT LOCAL FACTION FOR "PROTECTION".

5. ONE MAJOR FACTOR IN THE CURRENT SITUATION IS THE COMMANDOS, WHO ARE CLEARLY GAINING IN NUMBERS AND INFLUENCE AMONG THE STUDENTS AND WHO FREQUENTLY ARE THE INITIATORS OF ATTACKS AGAINST THE LEFT. IT IS FREQUENTLY ALLEGED BY A VARIETY OF SOURCES (THOUGH PREDOMINATLY FROM LEFT OF CENTER) THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONDONING, IF NOT ENCOURAGING, THE COMMANDOS. THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF EVIDENCE THAT THE NAP HAS USED ITS INFLUENCE WITHIN THE GOVERNING COALITION, AND PARTICULARLY ITS POSITIONS WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, TO "PACK" DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBERS OF SYMPATHETIC STUDENTS INTO VARIOUS EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND INTO CAMPUS DORMITORIES THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY LEFTIST-CONTROLLED. ALTHOUGH POLICE HAVE IN MANY CASES ACTED AGAINST COMMANDOS WHEN THE LATTER WERE GUILTY OF VIOLENCE, THE COMPLAINT PERSISTS, APPARENTLY WITH SOME JUSTIFICATION, THAT THE POLICE ARE MUCH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORE ZEALOUS IN THEIR PURSUIT OF LEFTIST SUSPECTS. WHILE THERE IS NO PROOF, THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME LIKELIHOOD THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACTUALLY SUPPORT THE COMMANDOS, IT LOOKS ON THEM AS A WELCOME WEAPON AGAINST LEFTISTS.

6. NEVERTHELESS, GOVERNMENT SECURITY MEASURES ARE MORE AGGRESSIVE THIS ACADEMIC YEAR THAN LAST. THE MAIN MEASURES HAVE BEEN VIRTUAL SATURATION OF THE MOST TROUBLE-PRONE SCHOOLS

WITH POLICE (OCCASIONALLY OUTNUMBERING THE STUDENTS); FREQUENT ARMS SEARCHES ON CAMPUSES, AT SCHOOL ENTRANCES, AND IN DORMITORIES; AND A GREATER WILLINGNESS OF SCHOOL AUTHORITIES TO CLOSE DOWN SCHOOLS AT THE FIRST SIGNS THAT THE SITUATION IS GETTING OUT OF HAND.

7. DESPITE THE FACT THAT STUDENT VIOLENCE HAS REACHED A LEVEL SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH WAS USED TO HELP JUSTIFY THE REMOVAL OF DEMIREL IN 1971, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT VIOLENCE IS LIKELY, AT ITS CURRENT LEVEL, TO CAUSE MILITARY INTERVENTION OR OTHERWISE BRING DOWN THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT. YEARS OF STUDENT DISORDERS APPEAR TO HAVE RAISED THE TOLERANCE LEVEL OF THE TURKS (INCLUDING THE MILITARY) TO NEWS OF STUDENT CASUALTIES. ANOTHER FACTOR REINFORCING THE CURRENT COMMANDERS' APPARENT DISINCLINATION TO INTERVENE PROBABLY IS THE APPROACH OF ELECTIONS.

9. CONSULATES GENERAL IN ISTANBUL AND IZMIR AND CNSULATE IN ADANA CONTRIBUTED TO THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT.
MACOMBER

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